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EXAMINED AND REFUTED.

A S I have not the honour to know you, it is more than probable, that whilst I controvert your opinions, I am not influenced by personal pique or animosity. I am totally uninterested in your fame or practice. You may be a great man, or a little man, for aught I know. From your Pamphlet I suppose you to be what the world calls a *plain-spoken man, honest and down-right*, but positive in your opinions. Such characters, however, notwithstanding their perpetual pro-

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penfity

penfity to contradiction, feldom bear being themfelves contradicted with any degree of patience. If this be really your character, I am forry for the pain I fhall give you ; “ but “ (I fpeak in your own words) there is an evil “ Spirit of Quackery gone forth that has poffeffed all orders of men among us. I would “ lay it, if I could, together with every Demon “ of Superftition and Error, and reftore the “ world to Truth and Nature.”

To enter the lifts againft the Demons of Quackery, Superftition and Error, in defence of the naked damfels, Truth and Nature, is an attempt that might have paused even the Knight of the Woeful Countenance himfelf. They are, indeed, very formidable enemies. If you have no objection, we will, by way of preface to the more immediate object of our confideration, enquire a little into the constitution of thefe your three opponent knights errant. It will probably facilitate our fubfequent investigations.

Quackery, confidered as a generic term, comprehends many fpecies. It is by no means confined to Phyfic. Law and Divinity have their Quacks, as well as we. The effential characteristics of a Quack are impudence and knavery ; knavery, in falſely pretending to ſuperlative knowledge, whether intuitive, acquired, or by inspiration ; and impudence, to boaſt of ſuch knowledge to the ignorant world. Now, tho’ Quackery in theſe two learned professions

essions be productive of some evils to mankind, in common with Medical Quackery, particularly that of picking men's pockets ; yet we cannot help acknowledging that our own Quacks are the greatest pests of Society, because health is our most valuable possession.

You, Sir, are a fellow of the London College of Physicians. You would “ decry all
 “ Quacks, from Æsculapius to the present, ei-
 “ ther as ignorant fools, or self-conceited im-
 “ postors, advertising daily lyes, whether
 “ mounted on stages, or riding in chariots.” I applaud your resolution to decry these vermin ; but merely to decry them, is only buffeting the wind. Your blows leave no impression. Besides, these advertising Practitioners, if I may use a wretched term, tho’ frequent in tolerable writers) are inoffensive, inconsiderable, when compared with the swarm of Pseudo-Doctors by which the Physicians of Great Britain are surrounded, recommended, and governed. If you be sincere in your declaration, why do you not, in concert with your brethren of the College, exert that power with which you are legally invested ? Why do you not break the chains that have been artfully forged by your natural dependants, and prevent the daily fatal consequences of self-sufficient, destructive ignorance ? But which rat will hang the bell ? That’s the question. You all know that the Practice of Physic in England is upon a wretched, a contemptible footing ; and yet the fear of offend-

ing your Masters (for such you have really made them) prevents the learned, the venerable College of Physicians from exerting their power in the only way by which their institution might be of service to mankind.

As to that illiberal exertion of your might, as a body corporate, manifested in the childish examination of physicians, whose *diplomas* from creditable Universities declare them to be your equals in point of medical education, it is a reproach to you as gentlemen or scholars, and a presumptive impeachment of your integrity. You pretend to consult the welfare of the Metropolis in your severity to the only class of men who ought to practise physic; whilst you suffer a tribe of ignorant, illiterate medicalasters, infinitely more numerous than yourselves, to destroy mankind with impunity.

Doubtless it is a reproach to Government that professed Quackery is not totally suppressed; but a most scandalous obloquy, that they are supported by Royal Patents. If any future age should behold these nations governed by solid Reason, that single circumstance of Patent Quacks will condemn our present Superiors for a race of venal idiots.

I have often said, and I am still firmly of opinion, that, unless our rotten branches can be lopt off, it were most advantageous to mankind totally to eradicate the very semblance of Physic, and leave the world once more to Nature and Old Women. But enough of Quacks and Quackery. With

With regard to the Demons, Superstition and Error, let me advise you, as a friend, to decline the combat. They are infinitely more formidable than Quackery itself. Not to depreciate the venerable antiquity of Quackery, Superstition and Error are coeval with the creation, and have continued to govern the world from that period to this. There have appeared indeed, at different times, chiefly in the last and present age, some few champions daring enough to stand forth in defence of Truth; but, in a world of fools, Truth can never be victorious. What the designs of Providence might be in creating such a world, I cannot determine; unless it were to supply a necessary bad link in the great *general* chain of creation, as, in the *particular*, we see toads, crocodiles, and rattle-snakes. Hitherto I have had my eye on your Preface; I now proceed to your Dissertation.

When an author writes upon a subject which hath been already frequently discussed, he must necessarily begin by persuading his reader, that former writers knew nothing of the matter he is about to investigate; otherwise his book is an unnecessary obtrusion on the Public. Accordingly, you begin by asserting, contrary to received opinions, that “ all
 “ that class of complaints which the Learned
 “ call chronic diseases, we most undoubtedly
 “ bring upon ourselves by our own indul-
 “ gences, excesses, or mistaken habits of life,
 “ or

“ or by suffering our ill-conducted passions to
 “ lead us astray, or disturb our peace of
 “ mind.”

This proposition, I apprehend, is true only in part. If you had asserted, that these are *sometimes* the causes of chronic diseases, your thesis would have been incontrovertible; but then it would have wanted novelty, its only recommendation. Before I proceed to prove you wrong, I must beg leave to quote another passage from the same page:—“ If you read
 “ authors or consult practitioners, what do
 “ you find, but that you have taken cold, (tho’
 “ you know not how) or that your complaints
 “ are gouty, rheumatic, bilious, &c. words that
 “ satisfy, though they give no idea.”

How you came to suppose that these words convey no idea, is difficult to imagine. That they are frequently misapplied by ignorant men, who have very imperfect ideas of these or any other diseases, I readily acknowledge; but that they do not convey distinct ideas to minds susceptible of distinct ideas, I positively deny, and appeal to every rational Physician in the kingdom.

Your next paragraph begins thus:—“ I have
 “ long had it in my mind to write upon
 “ chronic diseases in general, in the hope of
 “ giving mankind, what most assuredly they ne-
 “ ver yet had, a few rational ideas about them.”
 —This will be thought a very extraordinary
 assertion, if in the sequel it should appear that
 every

every rational idea in your Pamphlet hath been, for ages past, entertained by every tolerable writer on the subject. But it will appear still more extraordinary (when we consider, that the chief intent of your book is to inform us, that chronic diseases are not to be cured by medicine alone) to find these words in the same paragraph : — “ The skilful in
 “ medicine, and learned in nature, know well,
 “ that health is not to be established by medi-
 “ cine.” If the skilful in medicine, and learned in nature, know this, and have repeatedly communicated this knowledge to the world, what becomes of your assertion, That mankind have, *most assuredly*, never yet had a few rational ideas about chronic diseases ?

To suppose you unacquainted with the capital authors who have written upon chronic diseases, were unmannerly ; and yet I do not recollect a single writer of credit who ever imagined chronic diseases curable by medicine alone ; that is, solely by the use of any article in the *Materia Medica*, internally or externally applied. In this special acceptation, you use the word Medicine. On the contrary, the writers on chronic diseases, both antient and modern, unanimously insist on the indispensable necessity of exercise and temperance. In proof of this, it were easy to quote you passages without number.

Having thus dispatched our preliminaries, we come now to the main point. You are
 of

of opinion that,—“ Though the causes of
 “ chronic diseases have been multiplied with-
 “ out end, they may fairly be reduced to
 “ three, *viz.* Indolence, Intemperance, and
 “ Vexation ;”—“ for different diseases may have
 “ the same original cause, the difference pro-
 “ ceeding from the various degrees of
 “ strength and vigour in bodies ; so that
 “ what would be Gout in one, in another
 “ might be Rheumatism, Stone, Colic, Jaun-
 “ dice, Palsy,” &c. “ The Gout is manifestly
 “ a disease of the best constitution, and may
 “ therefore fairly stand as a representative of
 “ the rest.”

That we may be better able to judge of this matter, it will be necessary to enumerate the diseases which are generally called chronic ; St. Vitus's Dance, Asthma, Consumption, Scurvy, Dropsy, King's Evil, Cancer, Leprosy, Lethargy, Hysterical Passion, Malum Hypochondriacum, Madness, Worms, Chlorosis, Fluor Albus, Furor Uterinus, Diarrhœa, Dysentery, Epilepsy, Rickets, Stone, Gravel, Colic, Jaundice, Palsy, and Gout, their general representative.

And now, Sir, having cast your eye over this catalogue, can you possibly continue to affirm seriously, that, notwithstanding their different appellations, they are individually the Gout in masquerade, and their causes Indolence, Intemperance, and Vexation ?

Surely

Surely nothing would be more easy and ludicrous than to prove that most of these diseases proceed from a very different source ; but lest you should say,

What would be great I turn to farce,

PRIOR.

I will confine myself to one or two of those disorders which you have mentioned, and of which you suppose the Gout to be the archetype.

The Stone in the Bladder is sometimes attendant on the Gout, though rarely. It is often a disease of rustics, of mechanics, of women, and very frequently of children. There have been instances of children being born with a Stone in the Bladder. In these last, it could not be owing to their own Indolence, Intemperance, or Vexation ; and I am certain, you will not allow it to be in this case hereditary, for fear of the consequence of such a concession. Besides, the Stone generally admits of a radical cure by lithotomy, without any return, though the patient resume his former manner of living ; which, according to your hypothesis, ought invariably to produce another Stone, or some other type of the Gout. Experience tells us, this is not the case. The Rheumatism, be its cause what it will, is a disease which afflicts the lower class

of mankind more frequently than the rich, and from which the female part of our species are by no means exempt. The most laborious and robust Country-people are often tortured by this disorder, in consequence of lying on the ground, or being otherwise exposed to cold and moist air, when heated by labour. Can this Bastard-gout proceed from Indolence, Intemperance, or Vexation? And why does it not in these robust people rather assume the real Gout, which you tell us —
 “ is a disease of the best constitution, the dif-
 “ ference proceeding from various degrees of
 “ strength in bodies?” If that were true, the Indolent and Intemperate would surely never be afflicted with the Gout, properly so called.

I appeal to all Mankind, and to the Faculty in particular, whether they do not recollect many instances of people perfectly cured of the Rheumatism without any alteration in their manner of living? I remember a very singular instance, many years ago, of a gentleman being almost immediately cured of a very tedious and painful Rheumatism by a few doses of a preparation of Antimony. He has never since had the least return. But the Gout, you aver, was never cured by medicine alone; *ergo*, the Rheumatism is not the Gout in disguise.

As to the Colic, the Jaundice, and the Palsy, they are diseases which, like the Rheumatism,

—— *æquo pulsant pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.*

They frequently attack the best constitutions: their causes are often accidental; and the first, *viz.* Colic and Jaundice, are often cured by medicine alone, without any return. The Palsy generally baffles medicine, diet, exercise, and every thing else. What affinity, therefore, is there between these diseases and the Gout?

But you affirm, that the Gout is neither *hereditary*, nor *periodical*, nor *incurable*. In the first and second articles of your proposition, you differ not only from every preceding writer on the subject, but from the opinion of all Mankind. Your arguments in support of the first are these:

“ If it were hereditary, it would be necessarily transmitted from father to son, and no man whose father had it could possibly be free from it.”

In like manner, suppose I were to say, If landed estates were hereditary, they would be necessarily transmitted from father to son, and no man whose father had a landed estate could possibly be deprived of it.

Begging your pardon, this is false reasoning. The Gout, like a landed estate, is hereditary, though not necessarily so. There are circumstances in which neither are hereditary; but you are not thence authorised to affirm, that if the Gout were hereditary, it must necessarily be transmitted from father to son, unless you had previously proved, that what does not constantly exist, can have no existence at all. If you only meant to assert, that all the children of gouty parents do not necessarily inherit the Gout, you are certainly right; but *we needed not a Ghost to tell us this.*

Your next argument in proof of its not being hereditary is, that it does not generally appear in women and children. Here again our landed estate is a case exactly in point. It is not hereditary, you say, because women and children do not possess it. The truth is, Nature has entailed the Gout on her male-issue, not to be possessed till they are of age; women and children are therefore generally excluded.

You boldly assert that,—“No diseases are hereditary but those of taint or infection, and maleformation. The Gout is none of these, and therefore is not hereditary.”

If this assertion were true, your conclusion would be just. But it is a mere assertion, unsupported even by the shadow of an argument. I appeal, therefore, to the experience of the whole Faculty, whether among many chronic diseases, Consumption, Scurvy, Scrofula,

Scrofula, Cancer, are not evidently hereditary? I do not say invariably, but frequently.

In the same page you reason thus:—" If
 " the Gout be a disease of indigestion, and
 " therefore of our own acquiring, we must
 " reason very ill, or rather not reason at all,
 " when we say it is hereditary; for surely
 " no man will say that indigestion is heredi-
 " tary any more than intemperance."

If indigestion be always of our own acquiring, it certainly cannot be hereditary. But I am taught by experience and medical observation, that in this case also the sins of the father are often punished upon the children to the third and fourth generation. Can you possibly, Sir, have been so long in the practice of Physic, without frequently observing particular families whose digestive faculties were generally weak by inheritance? But even without experience, a tolerable Theorist would rationally conclude, *à priori*, that if the children of robust and healthy parents be generally healthy and strong, those whose father had a weak stomach, or bad lungs, would generally be afflicted with the same diseases. Can there be any plausible reason assigned why the *viscera* should bear less resemblance to those of my father than my eyes, my nose, or any other feature of my face to his? This matter, however, does not rest upon Theory. It is determined by a thousand examples, with some of which you may be furnished by every one of
 your

your acquaintance. Here, I know you will retreat behind your "*causa prægumena, vel prædisponans* ; which of itself, you say, never produced any effect at all." Very true. So gunpowder never exploded without the application of fire. But if I place an open barrel of gunpowder in a smith's forge, am I not morally certain that the smith with his anvil and hammer will soon cut capers in the air ? In like manner, if this *causa prægumena*, which I inherit from my father, be of so combustible a nature that the least spark of the *causa procatarctica*, impossible to be avoided, will give it activity ; is it not morally certain that I shall have the Gout ; and may I not then, with the utmost propriety, thank my father for his bequest ? But to proceed :

" If the Gout be thought hereditary, because it is incurable by medicine, the same may be said of every other chronic disease, none of which are ever cured by it, I mean so as never to return *again*. When was there a man who having had one fit of the Rheumatism, Stone, or Colic, &c. however happily relieved by art for a time, had it not again, or something worse in the place of it."

You, Sir, are the best judge of what has been the case with your own patients ; but I will venture to affirm, that there is not another Physician in the Three Kingdoms who has not seen many instances of the Rheumatism,

tism, Stone, and the Colic, being cured so as never to return; and that without any reformation in the patient's manner of living. I have known many examples of a Chronic Rheumatism being effectually cured by the simple medicine of a flannel-waistcoat next the skin. So much for inheritance. We come now to the second member of your triple affirmation:

“*The Gout is not periodical.*” This you support in the following manner: “It is
“natural enough for those who believe the
“Gout hereditary to think it also periodical.”

—— How you happened to connect so intimately the idea of things *hereditary* and *periodical* is difficult to imagine. They have no more natural affinity than the king of England and the button on my coat. It is so far from being natural for those who think the Gout hereditary to think it *therefore* periodical, that I question whether any man, woman, or child, except yourself, ever supposed the Gout, or any other thing in Nature, periodical, *because* it was hereditary.

“If it were periodical, you say, it must
“be regularly so. The only periodical disease I know, is the Intermittent Fever,
“which, till it be disturbed by the Bark,
“is as regular as a good Clock.”

Here again, I conceive you are wrong. Intermittent Fevers are not always regularly periodical. In the course of your own practice you must frequently have met
with

with Intermittent Fevers, particularly in summer and autumn, which observed no regular hour, and with paroxysms of very uncertain duration. Intermittent Fevers, therefore, are not always as regular as a good clock. You cannot but recollect frequently to have seen periodical Head-achs, periodical Tooth-achs, and many other periodical complaints, attended with no Fever. Intermittent Fevers, therefore, cannot be the only periodical disease you know.

As to the question, Whether the Gout be a periodical disease, it is not a matter of opinion, but of fact, which is easily determined by those who are afflicted with that species of the Gout, which, on account of the regularity of its turns, is called by authors *Arthrites Regularis*. With regard to the Theories of ancient and modern writers, I am as tenacious of the privilege of thinking for myself as any Sceptic in the Kingdom; but when I find them unanimous in the history of a disease, divested of all theory, and founded solely on experience, I believe them implicitly, until many reiterated observations convince me they were mistaken. In the present case, observation confirms their assertions. They never meant to affirm, that every species of the Gout is periodical; but that there exists a frequent species of the Gout, which generally returns at certain seasons of the year.

Having

Having, as you supposed, demonstrated that the Gout is neither hereditary nor periodical, you next proceed to prove, That it is not incurable. Whatever may have been your success in defending the two preceding members of your proposition, in this attack you will certainly prove victorious; for you encounter an imaginary Foe; not a Giant, but a mere Windmill. It is so far from being the opinion of Physicians, that the Gout is incurable, except in its most inveterate state, that Authors of Credit abound with instances of the contrary. If you doubt my assertion, I refer you particularly to Morgagni and Van Swieten.

Indolence, Intemperance, and Vexation, you say, are the real original causes of all chronic diseases. To the consideration of each of these causes you assign a separate Chapter. That on Indolence you introduce with a physiological account of the circulation, secretion, and *crebrification* of the Animal Juices. Hence you demonstrate, That without the aid of muscular motion, the heart and arteries being unable to propel the blood with sufficient force, — “ the little vessels would, by their natural
 “ elasticity, close up into fibres, or be obstruct-
 “ ed by angular particles sticking in them, and
 “ stopping all passage. Numberless evils of
 “ the chronic kind, especially all nervous dis-
 “ eases, owe their origin to this cause alone”
 — that is, to the minute vessels being entirely
 D closed

closed up by their own elasticity, or obstructed by angular particles.

Before we proceed to discuss this matter, suppose I were to ask, what we are to understand by *Nervous Diseases*? You have already told us, that *Bilious, Nervous, &c.* are words that give no idea. Be this however as it may, your notion of angular particles is a Theory incapable of demonstration, so long as we remain ignorant of the figure of the constituent particles of matter. In this case, reasoning from analogy is mere hypothesis. But I need not take pains to refute this doctrine. Yourself hath saved me the trouble. Chronic diseases, you tell us, are the produce of Indolence, Intemperance, and Vexation. The labouring inhabitants of the country are least indolent, least intemperate, and have least vexation; therefore they are least obnoxious to chronic diseases. But the bodies of these labouring people are, *ceteris paribus*, demonstrably least vascular, a greater number of vessels being closed up into fibres; and hence, according to the above system, they ought to be most afflicted with nervous and other chronic diseases, especially the Gout; the contrary of which you will acknowledge to be true. How will you reconcile these palpable contradictions? Thus it generally fares with hypothetic doctrines.

Triumphing in your discovery, that medicine can never act upon the blood and vessels
like

like the joint force of all the muscles of the body, you again affirm, that there is no such thing as a lasting Cure for the Gout, or any other chronic disease, to be expected from medicine. But you likewise affirm, that cordials, bracers, strengtheners, volatiles, coagulate the juices, and corrupt the whole mass of blood.

Here I must beg leave to stop you for a moment. These are words of too much importance in the system of Physic to be suffered to pass as words of course. If in your philosophical enquiries you have actually discovered, that cordials, bracers, volatiles, and strengtheners really coagulate and corrupt the juices in the human body, demonstrate the fact,

—— *et eris mihi magnus Apollo.*

V I R G.

Your triumph on this occasion will be immense. You will have the satisfaction of confuting all our modern dabblers in Physic, who imagine cordials and bracers, particularly the Peruvian bark, to be antiseptics, which, according to your discoveries, are found to promote putrefaction; and volatiles, which have hitherto been supposed to be attenuants, will, henceforwards, become coagulants. If your Pamphlet had no other merit, this circumstance alone were sufficient to render your name immortal.

Upon the whole, however, the doctrine

contained in this section on the pernicious effects of Indolence, is in general incontrovertible ; namely, that Inactivity is often the Parent of Disease. But where is the Author, where is the Physician, who is not of the same opinion ?

INTEMPERANCE. This your second cause of chronic diseases you think a natural consequence of the first ; because indolent people want the “ whip and spur of Luxury “ to excite their jaded appetites.” I own it is often the case ; but, in general, indolent people are not the most intemperate : I cannot therefore subscribe to your opinion when you “ venture to say, that nine in ten of all “ the chronic diseases in the world, particularly the Gout, owe their first rise to Intemperance.”

Who, I would ask, are more intemperate than our English and Irish fox-hunters, our gentlemen of the army, and particularly the common soldiers ? But these are less afflicted with the Gout than any other class of people, especially the private men, among whom I never saw a Gouty patient. Our London porters, draymen, and chairmen are, in general, very intemperate ; yet they know no Gout ; Intemperance, therefore, cannot with justice be the Natural Parent of the Gout. On the contrary, our soldiers, porters, draymen, &c. demonstrate, that Intemperance is totally insufficient to produce it. That some chronic diseases
are

are the children of Intemperance, begotten upon Indolence, I readily grant: in this, however, there is nothing new, Physicians having always been of the same opinion.

“ In England, you say, all degrees of men are
“ furnished with the means of Intemperance.”

—“ In foreign countries they want the means.”

“ —They have, however, this advantage from it,
“ that they are much less afflicted with chro-
“ nic diseases than we are.” And you add,—

“ I verily believe there are more Gouts in
“ England than in all the rest of Europe.”

This you attribute to our eating “ Goose and
“ Pig with Sage, Onions, Pepper, Salt; Hare
“ with a pudding in the belly; Leg of Mut-
“ ton with Caper-sauce; Mutton-chops with
“ pickles, *the worst of all poisons*. --- Another
“ capital mistake that many people fall into,
“ is, that the flesh-meat they eat is always over-
“ done,” --- “ The less all flesh-meat under-
“ goes the power of fire, the milder and whole-
“ somer it is.” --- “ Upon this principle the
“ English cookery is to be preferred to the
“ French, who stew and roast to rags.”

Very true: the French, the Dutch, the
Germans, &c. not only stew and roast to rags,
but they season, compound, multiply, and so-
phistificate their dishes so enormously, that our
goose or pig with sage and onions, or leg of
mutton with caper-sauce, compared with their
most simple viands, are simplicity itself. Ne-
vertheless, you—“ verily believe there are more
“ Gouts

“ Gouts in England than in all the rest of
 “ Europe.” That is, in order to prove that
 high-seasoned and over-roasted meats produce
 the Gout, you tell us, that the people are
 most afflicted with it in England, where meats
 are least seasoned and least roasted.

The Paragraph immediately succeeding that
 above quoted begins thus :

“ This leads me to another observation,
 “ which, perhaps, none but Physicians, or those
 “ who have studied well the nature of man
 “ and his aliments, are able to make. It is
 “ this : That man being born to devour most
 “ of the fruits and animals of the earth
 “ and water, there ought to be a certain
 “ proportion of animal and vegetable sub-
 “ stances in his food ; the animal tending
 “ spontaneously to putrefaction, the vegetable
 “ correcting that tendency from going too far :
 “ thus from the due mixture of both quali-
 “ ties results that neutral property, equally dis-
 “ tant from acid as alkali, that is essentially ne-
 “ cessary to produce good blood.”

The necessity of a mixture of animal and
 vegetable food is indisputable ; but I believe
 you are mistaken in your Theory of this mat-
 ter. The antiseptic power in vegetables is
 not owing to their acescent quality, but to their
 containing a large proportion of that *gas* or
 vapour known at present by the name of *fixt*
air, which, as we shall see by and bye, you
 imagine to be so dreadful an enemy to human
 life.

life. But lest you should not chuse to abide by my opinion of this matter, I will quote you a passage from a book of credit, which, I presume, you have not read.

“ The general and well-known antiseptic quality in vegetable food is commonly accounted for by saying that it produceth acescent chyle ; but alcalescent or putrescent vegetables are equally powerful, in this respect, with the acescent ; therefore the antiseptic quality must depend upon somewhat that is general and common to all vegetables. By far the greatest share of the vegetables used in common diet, if we except the fruits and *farinacea*, are alcalescent or putrescent ; witness all the different kinds of *brassica*, *nasturtia*, Onions, Leeks, Garlic, Horse-radish, Mustard, Radishes, Spinage, Endive, Purslain, Lettuces : not one of these things can be called acescent, and yet they preserve the humours from putrefaction, or correct it where present as effectually as Sorrel or Lemon-juice.” *Macbride's Experiments.*

You are of opinion that, in general, the acescent diathesis prevails. Your words are these : --- “ And here I may observe, that the error of most men's diet, in every class of life, is, that the acid, crude and austere, almost always abound ; not that they do not eat flesh-meat enough, but they spoil it in the preparation and cookery, changing its
“ animal

“ animal nature into something worse than
 “ vegetable, taking off entirely all its tender-
 “ cy to dissolution and putrefaction by salting,
 “ smoking, pickling, potting, and preserving
 “ things that in their own simple nature would
 “ soon corrupt and dissolve ; but by these pre-
 “ parations are hardened and embalmed to
 “ keep for years, like mummies.”

But all other nations feed infinitely more upon smoked, dried, mummied meats than the inhabitants of these islands ; nevertheless you --- “ verily believe there is more Gout in
 “ England than in all the rest of Europe.”

You proceed thus : --- “ The same may be
 “ said of every kind of made dishes ; the salts,
 “ spices, hot herbs, and acids, with which
 “ they are seasoned and compounded, pre-
 “ serve and harden them to keep for ever ;
 “ the sauces and gravies they swim in, have
 “ the same effect as so much pickle.” --- But all other European nations, especially the French, exceed us infinitely in the use of made dishes, salts, spices, hot herbs, acids, sauces, gravies. Nevertheless you --- “ verily believe
 “ there is more Gout in England than in all
 “ the rest of Europe.”

Now this pernicious prevalent acescent diathesis, you attribute principally to the too frequent use of acescent food, which, you tell us, “ ne-
 “ ver became sour but by the act of fermenta-
 “ tion, which being raised in the stomach,
 “ *where it ought never to happen*, produces
 “ strange

“ strange tumults, wind, vapour, *gas*; that is,
 “ that fume arising from fermentating liquors
 “ of any kind which has been known some-
 “ times to kill at a stroke.”

Very true: this *gas*, this fixt or mephitic air, this produce of fermentation, is powerfully deleterious when received in large quantities into the lungs; but its effects in the stomach, where it is constantly generated, or rather extricated, are not only innocent but highly salutary. If you entertain any doubt of this matter, I beg leave to refer you again to Dr. Macbride's Experiments, where you will not only learn that this fixt air is most powerfully antiseptic, but that digestion in the stomach is performed chiefly by means of that very fermentation which, you tell us, ought never to happen. By Digestion, I conceive we mean the resolution of our food into its constituent particles, by giving liberty and elasticity to the universal cementing principle, fixt air, which can be no otherwise effected than by fermentation. Concerning the properties of this *vinculum elementorum primum*, I refer you likewise to Dr. Black's Experiments on Magnesia, Dr. Hales's Statics, &c.

Authors, before they write, should read.

PRIOR.

But lest your readers should mistake the matter, you proceed to enumerate the several

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ral pernicious, acescent, fermenting species of aliment in these words: --- “ These are sweets: “ of every kind, Puddings, Cakes, Pastry, “ Creams, Confections, &c. and every thing “ made of flour, especially fermented; bread, “ in particular, so far from being the whole- “ some thing many imagine, is not only un- “ wholesome by its acescency, but, by the “ strong ferment it contains, it forces into “ fermentation every thing capable of it that “ it meets with in the stomach.”

Such is the miserable uncertainty of humanity! The Parson instructs us to pray for *daily bread*: the Doctor tells us it is unwholesome, and that Providence gave us plenty of corn merely with a design to poison us. But, unfortunately for your argument, that very propensity to fermentation, to which you ascribe the unwholesomeness of bread, is the chief cause of its salubrity. Of this truth you would have been fully convinced, if your Theory had been founded on experiment.

Yet, not satisfied with depriving us of our *daily bread*, your next attack is upon our *daily wine*. — “ But the greatest acescent, or “ rather bane of all, high and low, rich or “ otherwise, whoever they are that take it “ constantly, is wine. Wine alone produces “ more diseases than all the other causes put “ together.”

This is a very bold assertion, and so absolute that it ought to be supported by indisputable
expe-

experiments or facts. Your arguments, however, such as they are, I shall select and transcribe in their proper order, allowing to each its full power and consequence.

Argument 1st. “ All men allow that wine
“ taken to excess is hurtful.”—Not only wine,
but every other species of aliment must be
hurtful when taken to excess; because by the
term Excess we mean that degree or quantity
which by experience is found to be hurtful.
This, therefore, is a self-evident proposition;
but it proves nothing.

Argument 2d. “ Wine accumulating a little
“ indigestion every day, corrupts all the juices
“ of the body most essentially. And though
“ it be taken with a view to promote digestion
“ and assist the operations of the stomach,
“ it manifestly does harm to both. Instead of
“ digesting and dissolving, it hardens and prevents
“ dissolution, and curdles and corrupts the milky
“ chyle and first juices produced from our food.” ---
This 2d Argument is, in fact, no Argument at all:
it consists entirely in assertion, and consequently
is sufficiently answered by simple negation.

Argument 3d. “ Wine, by its extraordinary
“ action, forces our food out of the stomach
“ too soon before it is softened, dissolved,
“ and properly prepared, and sends it into the
“ bowels crude, hard, and austere; in that state
“ to be carried into the blood,

“ there to produce every kind of disease.”—
 This again is mere *ipse dixit*. I deny the fact. Wine has no such power. Its effect on the stomach is rather sedative; else why do you order a little burnt wine after a puke? Water, on the contrary, is, to the nerves of the stomach, a powerful stimulus; else whence the immediate effect of cold water on persons fainting? This notion, that wine hardens instead of dissolving our aliment in the stomach, and therefore hinders digestion, is not new. It is indeed generally supposed to be the case; but I presume it is founded on false analogy and false philosophy: I therefore believe it to be a mistake. But there are more mistakes in our Theories of Digestion. Possibly I may set this matter right, in the result of a Series of Experiments, already far advanced, with which I intend to *oblige* the world, if they press me much.

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that tho’ you are so great an enemy to Wine, unless taken medicinally, you have not even advanced the semblance of an argument in defence of your opinion. But vinous spirit is generally known to stop fermentation, which, you say, ought never to happen in the stomach. I wonder you did not, on that account, allow us a few glasses after dinner.

You suppose, --- “ it will be said that many
 “ drink wine every day without Gout,
 “ Stone,

“ Stone, or any disease at all in consequence,” To which you add, --- “ I believe not many, “ or I should know some of them.” But is it possible you can positively affirm, that you do not know some people who drink wine every day, without any chronic disease in consequence? Or does your circle of acquaintance extend no farther than your patients? If I may urge my own observation, I declare, that, among all the constant wine-drinkers of *my* acquaintance, and they are pretty numerous, there is not one in fifty afflicted with Gout, Rheumatism, Stone, Colic, or any other chronic complaint; and even among those who live in every other respect most luxuriously, certainly not one in ten. If you have any curiosity to know what I thought of this matter seven years ago, read the following quotation from my inaugural *Thesis* on the Gout.

“ *Podagræ causæ προκαταρτυαί, occasionales, quos recensuerunt auctores æstimatissimi, sunt, victus opiparus, vesana vini compotatio, venus præmatura immoderata, vita sedentaria, perspiratio prohibita; cum quibus etiam aliæ pro variâ cujuscunque Theoriâ multifariæ annumerantur. Observavit Sydenhamus, & quidem ex universali observatione novimus, divites plus quam pauperes hoc morbo cruciari. Non ignoramus etiam hos ab illis vivendi tantum ratione discrepare; quocirca eam supra memoratas inter podagræ causas occasionales tutè recensere possumus. Non desunt tamen exempla innumerabilia luxuriè viventium*
qui

qui impunè ad tumulum usque belluantur : imò etiam affirmare liceat, inter homines lautiores, qui omni lūxus specie, quantum possint, sese indulgent, vix et ne vix quidem decimum quemque esse podagricum. Quamvis itaque verum sit, ut errores in rebus nonnaturalibus (ut barbarè satis vocari solent) certis sub conditionibus, podagræ causa evadant, sine tamen causâ προγυμενν, vel diathesi in corpore præexistente, eam producere nequaquam valeant."

In English thus : " The occasional causes of the Gout, enumerated by the best authors, are luxurious eating, immoderate drinking, premature and excessive venery, a sedentary life, obstructed perspiration ; with many other, according to the different Theory of each writer. Sydenham observed, and indeed from universal observation we know, that the rich are more frequently afflicted with this disease than the poor. We also know, that the former differ only in their manner of living : the above recited, therefore, we may safely reckon among the occasional causes of the Gout. Nevertheless, there are innumerable examples of persons who riot in luxury with impunity to the grave : nay, we may even affirm, that, among those who indulge themselves to the utmost, not a tenth part are afflicted with the Gout. It follows, therefore, though errors in the non-naturals (as they are barbarously called) may, under certain circumstances, be the cause of the Gout, that
without

without a pre-existent diathesis in the body, they are insufficient to produce that disease.

I beg the reader's pardon for translating this passage into English, being sensible that nothing can be more inconsistent with good breeding; but gouty gentlemen may forget their Latin, and possibly the Curate may live at a considerable distance.

“ Water, you say, is the only liquor Nature
 “ knows of, or has provided for all ani-
 “ mals; and whatever Nature gives us, we may
 “ depend upon it, is best and safest for us.” —
 But Nature gives us many poisons: are poisons therefore safe? Nature, with all her simplicity, is a wonderful adept in Chemistry. Wine is her own produce as well as water; and that by a process which Art cannot even imitate. But if you mean to infer, that we are to use such things only as require no assistance from Art, you immediately make Nebuchadnezzers of us all: our drink is water, our meat grass, and our clothing hair.

To the last sentence I have quoted, you annex the following: — “ Accordingly we see,
 “ that when we have committed any excesses
 “ or mistakes of any kind, and suffer from
 “ them, it is Water that relieves. Hence
 “ the chief good of Bath, Spa, and many
 “ other medicinal waters, especially to hard
 “ Drinkers. It is the element that dilutes
 “ and carries off crudities and indigestions,
 “ &c. the mineral virtues they contain may
 “ make

“ make them tolerable to the stomach in
 “ their passage, but do, as I believe, little
 “ more in the body: it is the water that
 “ cures.”

If I could suspect you of reading romances, I should say, you borrowed this opinion from Humphrey Clinker. But Dr. Falconer has probably told you (for I have not seen his book) that the salubrious effects of most medicinal waters are more rationally to be ascribed to that *gas* which you think so dreadfully deleterious as to destroy life at a stroke.

One quotation more, and we have done with this section on Intemperance.---“ There
 “ is another capital mistake many labour un-
 “ der in the choice of their wines, prefer-
 “ ring the strong, hot, coarse sorts, Madei-
 “ ra, Port, Mountain, &c. to the milder,
 “ more elegant, and certainly less unwhole-
 “ some French and Italian wines, account-
 “ ing them better for the stomach, and good
 “ against wind.”

In answer to this, I have only to remind you of a passage which I have already quoted, where you told us that the error of most men's diet is, that the acid almost always prevails. Now these small French and Italian wines are infinitely more acid than Port, Madeira, or Mountain. Besides, they more effectually prevent fermentation, which, you say, ought never to happen in the stomach. The conclusion is obvious.

Having

Having thus dispatched your two first causes of chronic diseases, Indolence and Intemperance, we now come to the third and last, viz. *Vexation*, which, in your acceptation of the word, comprehends Anger, Envy, Resentment, Discontent, and Sorrow. But as you propose no remedy for any of these species of Vexation, it is of no importance to the Reader whether we admit it as one of the causes of the Gout or not. You wisely considered, that the passions of the mind are involuntary, and that therefore to desire a man not to be sorrowful, or not to be in love, because it might produce the Gout, were just as rational as to beg of him to alter the shape of his large nose, because it might afford a handle to his antagonist. This section, therefore, on account of its insignificance, might have been entirely disregarded. Nevertheless, I cannot turn it over without touching upon one Paragraph.

You say — “ it is in sleep that all nourishment is performed ;” — and the reason you give for this new opinion is — “ that in sleep
 “ the muscles of the body are composed and
 “ relaxed into a genial temporary kind of
 “ palsy, that leaves not the least obstruction
 “ or hindrance of the passage of the blood to
 “ every atom.” — But you have told us before, that the strength of the heart and arteries is not sufficient to propel the blood
 F through

through the capillary vessels, without the assistance of muscular motion.

We are now arrived at the last, the important Chapter, which treats *of the Cure of the Gout, and all other Chronic Diseases, and the Repair of a Broken Constitution.*

Having learnt, in the preceding part of your Pamphlet, that the Causes of the Gout, &c. are Indolence, Intemperance, and Vexation, it was natural to suppose that in this Chapter on the Cure, we should find *Activity, Temperance, and Peace of Mind.* To these specifics you add —— “ a few well-chosen antimonial, “ absorbent, or saponaceous deobstruents and “ sweeteners;” abstinence from Wine, except once or twice a week; and occasionally a dose of rhubarb, with a little of *your Magnesia*, by way of antidote after a debauch. —— This, I think, comprehends your intire therapeutic plan.

With regard to Activity and Temperance, you are probably right, as you echo the opinions of the principal authors on the subject. Even I, who, like St. Paul, came late into the vineyard, have declared the same opinion in my Thesis above quoted, from which I beg leave also to transcribe the following paragraph:

“ *In debito corporis exercitio, ac frugali*
 “ *mensâ, videtur Sydenhamus maximam cura-*
 “ *tionis spem posuisse; nec quidem immeritò,*
 “ *quoniam podagræ, etiam inveteratæ, solo*
 “ *labore, cum cibo simplice, sanatæ exempla*
 “ *plurima*

“ plurima habentur. Commemorat illustr. Van
 “ Swieten, sacerdotem, valde podagricum, bene-
 “ ficio pingui fruentem, qui infelicitè, vel
 “ feliciter potiùs, a piratis captus, per biennium
 “ ad remos damnatus fuit; ex quo autem reme-
 “ dio, integerrimam podagræ curationem obti-
 “ nuit. Nunc quamvis hoc pharmacum plu-
 “ rimis constitutionibus nimis acre videatur,
 “ docet tamen podagram inter morbos incur-
 “ biles immeritò enumeratam esse.”

In English thus: — “ In proper exercise and
 “ temperance Sydenham seems to have placed
 “ his greatest hopes of cure; nor indeed with-
 “ out reason, there being many examples
 “ even of inveterate Gouts cured solely by
 “ labour and plain diet. The illustrious Van
 “ Swieten tells us of a priest, in possession of
 “ a fat living, and violently afflicted with the
 “ Gout, who unfortunately, or rather fortu-
 “ nately, was taken by pirates, and condemn-
 “ ed to labour at the oar during two whole
 “ years; by which remedy, however, he was
 “ entirely cured of the Gout. Now, tho’ this
 “ medicine may seem too violent for most
 “ constitutions, nevertheless we learn from
 “ this example, that the Gout is improperly
 “ ranked among incurable diseases.”

As to peace of mind, as a medicine, you
 and I, as physicians, have nothing to do with it.

What you mean by *absorbent* deobstruents
 and sweeteners, I do not comprehend. I know

of no absorbents, except calcareous earths, which, so far from being deobstruents, if I might coin a word, I would call *obstruents*. And as to *sweeteners*, it is a term, which, as you observed on another occasion, may satisfy, but gives no idea.

The article of Wine, I think, I have sufficiently answered already.

But concerning *your* Magnesia, I know not what to say to it. I never saw nor heard of *your* Magnesia, and am therefore ignorant of its peculiar virtues. But might not your enemies hence take occasion to insinuate, that your Dissertation on the Gout was written purposely to advertise your Magnesia?

After all, says the Gouty Reader, admitting that you have proved Doctor Cadogan to be wrong in every page of his book, what am I the better, unless you give us some opinion of your own which shall be less liable to objection?

I answer: You have already seen my opinion, both of the cause and cure of the Gout, in the two Latin scraps transcribed from my Thesis, published in the year 1765. I have no theory but what is founded on facts. Hence I conclude, that the cause of the Gout is not to be sought for in the daily use of wine, nor even in intemperance in that or in any other species of aliment, unless conjoined with Inactivity. From facts I likewise conclude, that the Gout is hereditary; and
also,

also, that a radical cure is to be expected, not in abstinence from wine, nor in this or that particular article of food or medicine, but in *Temperance and Labour*: I say, Labour, properly distinguished from what is commonly understood by Exercise.

And now, Doctor Cadogan, I have done. Give me your hand, whilst I declare, upon my veracity, that thro' the whole of these animadversions, my pen has been guided solely by the love of truth. I hope, like our brethren at the bar, we may dispute in our profession, and yet dine together in peace and good humour. By the bye, if I should ever have that pleasure, I request it may be on one of your wine-days. If you think there is rather too much levity in my manner of treating this grave subject, I have only to remind you, that controversy is in its nature dull, and therefore, more than any other species of writing, requires some zest, even tho' it should border a little upon acrimony, to keep the reader's attention awake.

When I had nearly finished this trifle, I saw advertised Dr. Falconer's *Observations* on your pamphlet. I have not seen his performance; but, from my knowledge of his abilities, I dare say it is much to the purpose. Nevertheless, from a supposed knowledge also of myself, I imagine his work and mine bear very little resemblance to each other.

Perhaps

Perhaps I ought to apologize for troubling you with my Epistle so late; but Fortune hath thrown me into a remote corner of the world, where we seldom meet with new books till many months after their publication. It is but a very short time since your Dissertation reached the hand of,

S I R,

Your most obedient, &c.